

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ADDIS 02464 021342Z
ACTION SY-05

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SYE-00 /006 W
-----050051 021343Z /43
P R 021300Z JUN 78
FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8584
INFO AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

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SY CHANNEL

STATE FOR A/SY/OPS/FO AND A/SY/PRS ATTN: S.A. PENN

NAIROBI FOR RSS

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: ASEC
SUBJ: EXPLOSIVE MATERIAL

1. UPON THE CLOSURE OF THE ISRAELI DIPLOMATIC MISSION TO ADDIS ABABA IN 1973 CERTAIN ITEMS OF DEFENSIVE MATERIAL WERE TURNED OVER TO THE US MISSION FOR SAFE KEEPING OR DISPOSAL. IT HAS COME TO THE RSO'S ATTENTION THAT AMONG THESE MATERIALS ARE 16 DEVICES THAT ORIGINALLY APPEARED TO BE GAS GRENADES.

2. CORRESPONDENCE FROM THE RSO TEL AVIV ABOUT THESE DEVICES HAS RECENTLY REVEALED THAT THESE DEVICES ARE NOT GAS GRENADES BUT RATHER EXPLOSIVE CONCUSSION GRENADES. PARTICULAR INFORMATION AS TO THE NATURE OF THESE DEVICES HAS ALERTED US TO THE FACT THAT ALL 16 GRENADES HAVE REACHED THE END OF THEIR SHELF LIFE AND IN FACT HAVE EXCEEDED IT BY 3 YEARS. SPECIFICS ABOUT THESE DEVICES ARE LISTED BELOW AND WERE RECEIVED FROM THE ISRAELI DEFENSE FORCE VIA RSO
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TEL AVIV.
QUOTE:

A. ATTACK HANDGRENADE NO 14 CONSISTS OF A CARTON CYLINDER RIMMED ON THE TOP WITH A METAL SHIM COATED WITH TIN. THE DETONATOR HOUSING WHICH IS LOCATED IN THE CENTER OF THE BODY IS MADE OF A COPPER SHIM AND HAS AN OPENING FOR SCREW-ING THE MECHANISM. THE BOTTOM IS MADE OF THIN METAL PLATE

AND HAS A CLOSED COVER IN THE CENTER. THE COLOR OF THE GRENADE IS OLIVE GREEN WITH A RED BAND AROUND THE BODY. THE BODY BEARS THE FOLLOWING INSCRIPTION: GRENADE NO 14, HAND, ATTACK*

B. THE GRENADE IS AN ATTACK GRENADE WHOSE BLASTING EFFECT IS CREATED WITH VERY LITTLE FRAGMENTATION SINCE ITS BODY IS MADE OF CARTON. THE GRENADE'S SHELF LIFE IS 10-15 YEARS. THE MECHANISM MATERIAL DESINTEGRATES IN OLD MECHANISMS. THE MAIN FILLER MATERIAL IN THE GRENADE IS TNT WHICH IS VERY STABLE, HOWEVER, ATTENTION MUST BE PAID TO THE FOLLOWING: A MECHANISM WITH MATERIAL WHICH HAS BEGUN TO DESINTEGRATE OR WHICH SIGNS OF DISCHARGE ARE APPARENT IS EXTREMELY DANGEROUS AND THE GRENADE MUST BE DESTROYED. IN THE THE DELAYING TIME MAY SHORTEN THUS ENDANGERING THE PERSON HANDLING. THE GRENADE IS NOT DANGEROUS WHEN STORED AS LONG AS NONE OF THE ABOVE SYMPTOMS APPEAR. THE CONDITION OF THE GRENADES SHOULD BE CHECKED IN A MAXIMUM SAFETY LOCATION.

C. THE MOST EFFICIENT WAY TO DISPOSE OF THESE GRENADES IS TO EXPLODE THEM IN A HOLE DUG OUT FOR THIS PURPOSE. CARE MUST BE TAKEN NOT TO DESTROY THESE GRENADES BY OPERATING THEM AS THESE OLD MECHANISMS MAY HAVE A VERY SHORT DELAYING TIME.

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D. COMMENT: THE MECHANISM DESCRIBED IN THE PHOTOGRAPH WE RECEIVED IS THIRTEEN YEARS OLD THUS BEING AT THE END OF ITS SHELF LIFE.

UNQUOTE

3. ATTEMPTS BY THE RSO TO HAVE LOCAL POLICE OR SECURITY OFFICIALS REMOVE THESE DEVICES FROM THE EMBASSY COMPOUND HAVE MET WITH NEGATIVE RESULTS. POLICE AND SECURITY OFFICIALS HAVE BEEN MOST ADAMENT IN THEIR DENIAL TO ASSIST THE RSO.

4. IT IS THE POST'S OPINION THAT EFFORTS TO REQUEST ASSISTANCE AT A HIGHER LEVEL IN THE ETHIOPIAN GOVERNMENT WILL BE MET WITH LIKE RESULTS ALONG WITH HAVING THE POSSIBILITY OF PROVOKING CERTAIN ETHIOPIAN SENSITIVITIES SHOULD THIS REQUEST BE MADE.

5. REQUEST GUIDANCE IN THE SAFE HANDLING AND DISPOSAL OF THESE DEVICES AS CONTINUED MAINTENANCE POSES POSSIBLY GRAVE (PARDON THE PUN) CONSEQUENCES.

6. PLEASE REPLY VIA IMMEDIATE PRECEDENCE.

7. CHARGE CONCURS.
MATHERON

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